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---

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.—HOR.

---

Moneo, domine ut sis prudens ad victum, sine quo,  
Cætera remedia frustra adhibentur. MONTANUS.—I. D. B.

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1833.



LONDON:  
PRINTED BY MANNING AND SMITHSON,  
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## P R E F A C E.

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THE philosophical views of disease unfolded by Mr. Abernethy in his lectures, and made known to the public in his “Observations on the Constitutional Origin of Local Diseases,” have probably contributed more largely to improve the practice of surgery than the labours of any other individual. — They have slowly wrought their way, until they influence in a greater or less degree the practice of every well-educated surgeon. It may still, however, be doubted whether their application be yet commensurate with their claims.

The manner in which Mr. Abernethy has been, in my own hearing, so often misrepresented, has shewn me that by many he has been misunderstood. It may have happened, that disagreeing in the extent of his generalizations, many have not accorded to his doctrines that cautious examination by which alone *their extent can be understood*, or their *comprehensiveness appreciated*.—There can be little doubt that not a few have overlooked the value of his principles in consequence of a disposition to estimate it by the simplicity of his application of them. It is not for me to determine the cause; but that his views are not so extensively applied in practice as they deserve to be, I infer from the fact, that many disorders are still allowed to maintain a character of proverbial obstinacy, which become exceedingly tractable when treated by measures directed to ensure a tranquil condition of the chylo-



poietic viscera. It is probable that many modifications of Mr. Abernethy's principles, as applied to the relief of individual diseases, remain yet to be discovered; and I have reason to believe that he was not aware of the example which I am about to offer.

For many years I listened with pleasure to the lessons of this great man, and have not wanted either inclination or opportunity of subjecting his views to a patient and practical investigation. It is my intention to submit to the profession such of the results as, on a considerate examination of the state of practice, shall appear likely to be useful.

In the absence of yet less matured illustrations, I at present only put forth that modification of Mr. Abernethy's principles which I have found applicable in the treatment of the various forms of *Porrigo*.





## INTRODUCTION.

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### CHAPTER I.

---

IN considering the probable progress of practice in so large a class of diseases as those affecting the skin, we should certainly a priori be disposed to anticipate that those diseases would be most intractable which were attended by the greatest constitutional disturbance, or which threatened inflammation or structural alteration of vital organs—and that in proportion as a disease became ushered in or accompanied by little general disorder, so would it become amenable to the influence of treatment.

The state of the fact, however, with regard to cutaneous diseases, is widely

different. — The facility with which the various forms yield to our art, being, with few exceptions, in a tolerably accurate proportion to the serious extensive or complicated general disturbance by which they are characterised. This result, apparently so contrary to all rational anticipation, appears to me to admit of the following explanation. In some diseases the formidable nature of the general disturbance not only compels us to direct our attention to it, but often with an anxiety which renders us absolutely regardless of circumstances of minor import; as happens in acute forms of the Exanthemata.—Other diseases are too manifestly accompanied by a bad state of health to allow of their connexion with it to be overlooked or mistaken; a third set are so obstinate, so pertinaciously annoying, and are attended with so little local alteration, that this disproportion alone suggests the possible influence of a cause not to be discovered in the seat of its local manifestation. These circumstances (and as it appears to me, vrey much in the way here represented) have led physicians and



surgeons already to treat the majority of cutaneous diseases by means directed to the improvement of the general health.\*

There are however still, cutaneous affections in which the disturbance is neither formidable, alarming, nor very plainly developed, and in which its very existence, because often unattended by any very obvious indication, is overlooked and merged in the contemplation of the more prominently troublesome and disgusting peculiarities of their local characters, and wherein the treatment has been confined to the removal of these, regardless of the constitutional disturbance on which they depend. This is strongly exemplified in the treatment usually pursued in the various forms of *Porrigo*, and the result is just what sounder views of disease must lead us to expect; viz.—that with the exception of

\* The consideration of the whole of the diseases of the skin, strongly supports this view of the subject: as examples, I may refer to

The *Exanthemata*, *Lichen*, *Strophulus*, *Prurigo*, which are in the order which I have placed their illustrations of these observations.

specific malignant diseases, they are the most obstinate of all cutaneous affections.

This appears to me to be a brief but true account of the state of the practice with regard to Porrigo; and I can only say, that if it be in any sense an over-drawn picture, it has not been occasioned by supineness on my part, in endeavouring to ascertain the real state of the case. I have availed myself of every opportunity which has presented itself of inquiring into the practice of others, and at the same time freely communicated the nature and results of my own. I cannot add more on this head without subjecting myself to misconstruction, or what would be worse, saying that which might not be agreeable to others. I shall therefore only hope, that the reader will give the treatment a fair trial, and assure him of my confidence that the result will not disappoint his expectations.



## CHAPTER II.

### *General Observations on the Local Characters, and Constitutional Origin of Porrigo.*

---

THE various forms of Porrigo, popularly known by the names of scald-head, tinea, ringworm of the scalp, &c., are placed by Drs. Willan and Bateman amongst the pustular forms of cutaneous diseases. They are figured in the delineations of Dr. Willan; and in the plates published by Alibert, they are represented under the appellation of Les Teignes. In their local characters these diseases are to be considered as inflammations of certain portions of the skin terminating in the formation of pustules.

These pustules are sometimes large, at others small; their incrustations may be

circumscribed or extensively confluent, or they may assume some peculiarity of form; in some instances they separate in large portions; in others, a multitude of small bran-like scales are thrown off, and the observation of these facts has led to a division of the disease into corresponding varieties.

The divisions adopted by Dr. Bateman are the Larvalis, Favosa, Scutulata, Furfurans, Lupinosa, and Decalvans. An analagous division, or one not materially different, will be found in Alibert. The Porrigo Decalvans is not attended by the formation of pustules, but is classed with Porrigo by Dr. Bateman in consequence of its frequently occurring in common with that disease in schools and large establishments. With respect to the formation of pustules, therefore, the propriety of this classification may be questioned. As regards the state of constitution by which I contend these diseases are generally accompanied, I am not certain that the arrangement is disadvantageous or objectionable.

In a practical point of view, I regard



the distinctions to which I have referred, as altogether unimportant, since I am certain that all the varieties which they designate are easily relieved by treatment, which, if not the same in its details, is directed on the same principle. Modifications in the treatment are certainly required; these however result, not from any difference in the local characters of the complaint, but from the variations which occur in the seat, and in the indications of the general disorder by which they are accompanied; to which may be added those obviously suggested by difference of age and certain constitutional peculiarities. The principle to which I refer, is the regulation of the digestive organs, as effected by a particular kind of diet, and by medicine directed to ensure a healthy condition of the various secretions. Reverting, however, to the several varieties of this disease, I would observe that those who are desirous of investigating them with a view to their distinctive peculiarities, must not expect to find these in practice, and especially in that of public institutions, so clearly represented

as the descriptions of authors would lead them to anticipate. On the contrary, these diseases are usually presented to us, obscured by vast quantities of matted hair mixed with considerable incrustation, the offensive accumulation of several days, weeks, or even in some cases, months. The removal of all this discovers a red shining portion of inflamed skin, on which are seen numerous groups of small points which are to be considered as new pustules. When the disease is in progress of cure, these points are no longer observable. If, on the contrary, the disease is to continue, the pustules enlarge, become more or less confluent, and form incrustations which, on being thrown off or removed, again discover other pustules proceeding in the same manner. This is all the description I think it necessary to give of diseases so familiarly known; and to those who may require a more detailed account, I cannot do better than recommend the works of Drs. Willan, and Bateman, and M. Alibert.

The manner in which these affections have usually been treated, and that in which



for the most part they continue to be, so far as my observations have gone, is almost entirely local. I do not say that aperients may not have been occasionally administered, or that some general caution on the subject of diet may not have been added, but no systematic attempt to regulate the diet has hitherto attended the practice. The dependance has almost, if not entirely, been placed on the effect of cleanliness and local applications; measures not unimportant I admit, but certainly only to be regarded as subsidiary in cases of any obstinacy. The foregoing observation is applicable, for the most part, to that which has been written on the subject, although singularly enough the enumeration of local remedies is generally concluded by an admission of their too frequent inefficacy.\* I do not consider Dr. Bateman, notwithstanding his recommendation of tonics and diet in particular

\* In one form only (*Scutulata*) Dr. Bateman recommends no less than upwards of thirty different local applications, without making allowance for their being "varied and combined," "and not one of these is always successful, singly, under circumstances apparently the same," &c.—*Bateman's Synopsis*, p. 174.

cases, an exception to this remark, in which I believe any one will coincide who reads carefully the whole of what he says on the subject.

The well-known and perplexing obstinacy of these diseases, their great prevalence among young persons, their contagious nature, and the impediment which these circumstances, in conjunction, offer to the business of education in all individuals who do not enjoy the advantages of private instruction, have impelled medical men to seek, with no common anxiety, for some mode of accelerating their removal. That their researches have been (at least as far as I can ascertain) unsuccessful, of itself, forms a *prima facie* case that the nature of the diseases has been misunderstood; and I trust that this will farther appear, from the results which I am about to offer.

Dr. Bateman and others have considered that sometimes porrigo is purely local; but the premises whence this conclusion has been drawn are, to say the least of them, very unsatisfactory. They may be said, indeed, to consist of this single fact: that



children, who are otherwise in apparently good health, receive the disease by contagion.

Nothing is more true, than that diseases connected with a disordered state of health, or with a disturbed condition of the digestive organs, will nevertheless present themselves with the general disorder in one case well developed, and in another scarcely discoverable, so far as the present symptoms are concerned; but it is, to me, very difficult to imagine how a disease can be, at any time, purely local, which at others requires bark, tonics,\* and in fact, that which both medically and dietetically must be regarded as treatment essentially constitutional. It is, however, very intelligible, and true, that local diseases, which ordinarily present but very obscure indications of the sources whence they spring, do at other times very glaringly expose to us a fact in their character which, under less formidable circumstances, had escaped our penetration.

When a cutaneous disease becomes very

\* Bateman's Synopsis, p. 275.

prevalent, or when it appears as an epidemic, it is very difficult to say, out of a given number of persons, how many receive it by contagion or infection; and, in how many it arises indigenously, as it were,—that is, those who are said to receive it as the prevailing epidemic. But, passing over this, the mere circumstance of a child, apparently in good health, becoming afflicted with a prevailing cutaneous disease, by no means justifies the assumption that the disease is local.

If there be any one thing clear about the often-discussed subject of infection and contagion, it is, that there is a certain condition of the system favourable to the acceptance of the contagion. On no other grounds than this admission can the various phenomena connected with this extensive subject admit of explanation; and it is no argument in support of a denial of this condition, to say that we are ignorant of any mode by which it can be discovered. Its existence is proved by the consideration of the facts presented both by those who receive, and by those who resist contagion. Indeed,



were we to conclude that diseases were local because they occurred in individuals exposed to contagion, who were otherwise *apparently* healthy, I conceive that we could scarcely adopt an hypothesis more at variance with facts almost daily presented to us, or leading to more untenable or mischievous conclusions. A further discussion on this point would lead me very far from my present object, wherefore I will confine myself to a few remarks on the want of correspondence which often exists between the nature of a disease, and if I may be allowed the expression, its constitutional indications.

In many diseases, which are clearly proved by subsequent observations of them to be of constitutional origin, there is sometimes not the slightest indication of general disorder; nay, it is tolerably clear that their occurrence relieves or prevents the general disorder with which they are connected. I need only refer to the phenomena observable in different cases in the common indolent ulcerations in the lower extremities, which crowd in such numbers to every

public institution. Many of these people will not only assert that their health is good, but the surgeon (if the ulcer itself be not proof sufficient) will in vain seek for other evidences of constitutional disorder; That the diseases under which they labour are nevertheless of constitutional origin is sufficiently demonstrated by facts of this kind.

First, they are often curable by rest and regulation of diet alone. Secondly, if cured without these attentions they are often followed, and very quickly too, by some serious internal malady; and lastly, by the fact that those instances in which there has not been some previous disease whose amelioration was synchronous with the occurrence of the local malady, or in which obvious indications of disordered health do not present themselves, are not only exceptions in the mass, but require just as much as any other class of diseases, attentions to the general health for their *safe* removal.

There is nothing more certain than that many local diseases occur under circumstances in which they are the only evidences of general disorder, nor any thing



more probable than they are usually efforts of nature (too often ineffectual it must be admitted) to relieve some important function. How many states of system, very far removed from health, present no one of the signs by which we usually recognize disorders? I need scarcely labour to impress this on the mind of any surgeon who has even for a moment reflected on the exceedingly varied effects of local injury, or on the phenomena presented by different cases of Phlegmonous Erysipelas alone. There is scarcely any one I should think who has not, in his own experience, seen cases where the consequences, excited by local causes, have been altogether inexplicable from the extent or severity of the local injury. I do not relate cases of this kind, because I think it unnecessary.

When I use the term general health, and derangement of the chylopoietic viscera, I would not be understood as always using them synonymously. That the digestive organs are deranged more or less in every case of *spontaneous* local disease, is my firm opinion; but I do not think that they

are in all cases *primarily* affected. I believe that in many instances the nervous system is primarily affected; and that in some extraordinary cases the alimentary organs may not sympathise in any material degree: but I must believe that this is a very rare exception; that in general the digestive organs very quickly sympathise with primary disorders of the nervous system: and hence it arises that the treatment of the two classes of cases resolves itself into one, directed by the same principle; viz.—to preserve or restore the tranquillity of the nervous system; and as our direct power in this way is very limited, our chief endeavour will be directed (to use Mr. Abernethy's words) to “take care that the nervous system receive no additional disturbance from those organs which are so wont to disturb it,” viz. the chylopoietic viscera.\*

\* I have at this moment a case which very happily illustrates this point.—A young woman received a severe shock in going into a room where there was a corpse. She fell down, and was some time before she recovered her senses. She continued in a very nervous state. The catamenia stopped for nine months; by this time her leg began to exhibit a varicose state of the veins; and at



To return from this apparent digression to the consideration of Porrigio, I submit that it is no proof of its local character that children who are otherwise in apparently good health receive it by contagion. On the other hand, I contend that in the vast majority of cases we do not find the constitutional disturbance so masked as to require that we should have recourse to the foregoing reasoning or analogy for its explanation.

I state without hesitation that in a Dispensary as large as any, if not the largest in

present, two years from the commencement, exhibits as large a mass of diseased veins, from the ankle to the knee, as I have ever seen at any age. Her bowels have been very costive for many months, so that she has been, until lately, obliged to have constant recourse to aperient medicine. About six weeks ago she struck her leg, and as an ulcer formed, which proving obstinate, she applied to me. Her pulse is frequent, her tongue furred, and her appetite deficient; but since she has had the ulcer, her bowels, she says, have acted regularly without medicine. Here the nervous vascular and digestive systems became disordered in the order which I have mentioned them. I shall have occasion hereafter to refer to this case, in connexion with other subjects, when I shall give its results; on the present occasion I leave the reader to draw his own conclusion.

the metropolis, where I have seen the cases which have presented themselves during a period of twelve years, it is very rarely that I have seen a patient who did not present some very obvious indication of disordered health; whilst in some patients, in whom the general disorder was less strongly marked, and in whom the local irritation consequent on extreme neglect seemed to be adequate to keep up the diseases, I have in vain instituted a treatment purely local.

The indications of disordered health have been very different in different cases—but furred, vascular, or otherwise unhealthy tongue; costive, or purged bowels; deficient or voracious appetite; fitful or fidgety state of the nervous system, rendering the patients fractious and unmanageable; slimy, gelatinous, discoloured or otherwise disordered secretions from the bowels; one or more of these several conditions in various combination has been present. Many children have been presented in that peculiar state of unhealthy repletion consequent on protracted lactation, so prolific a source of disease amongst the children of the poor in



this metropolis. Some patients have had the abdomen *tumid*, and other marks of mesenteric affection. In fact I have seen but very few who have not presented some indication of disordered health which was far from equivocal. And with regard to those few in whom these indications have been less marked, I can only say that if a child got rapidly well of a troublesome and loathsome disease in less than one fourth of the time usually required for its removal by a treatment directed to tranquilize the functions of the digestive organs, I should be just as satisfied that it depended on a disturbed condition of these organs, as if the tongue had been ever so furred, or there had been present all the usual symptoms of alimentary or chylopoietic disorder.

Diseases of the skin may sometimes be relieved by treatment directed to the alimentary canal, on the principle of counter-irritation. This however is seldom requisite and still more rarely advisable, whilst it affords another proof of the sympathy between these organs which is never more strongly or frequently exemplified than in the dis-

eases of children. As I should scarcely be excused for publishing distinct cases of Porrigio, I will now state the general results of the treatment of this disease in the Finsbury Dispensary; by which I hope it will appear that I do not more strongly urge the constitutional treatment than it deserves.

The Dispensary relieves about 5000 patients annually. The cases of Porrigio in a crowded and populous district, where many houses contain a family on each floor, bear at least their usual proportion with other diseases; and as the people are in general extremely poor and dirty, certainly to be regarded as cases any thing but favourable for any kind of treatment, yet I can safely aver, that the average time required for the removal of these diseases is not more than six weeks. Some are relieved in much less time, whilst some require three months, and now and then, but very rarely, an exception occurs, requiring even a longer time for its removal.

Accounts are given of the comparative obstinacy of the different varieties of Porrigio: I can only say, I have never seen any



thing to justify such views. All the cases have been treated in the manner I am about to recommend. With the single exception presently to be mentioned, I could never satisfy myself that the time required for the removal of the disease had any reference to the variety of the affection; whilst there has been a constant relation between the duration of the case and the degree of constitutional disturbance, and the regularity with which the treatment has been followed. The *Porrigo Scutulata* is usually considered as obstinate as any form of the disease; yet I am sure that the results which I have stated have been more largely drawn from that variety than any other. The *Porrigo Lupinosa* has been with me a rare disease, and I believe it is not a very common variety in this country; but a very bad case of it yielded just as readily as any other to attention to the general health.

The exception to which I have referred is the *Porrigo Decalvans*, if indeed it is to be regarded as *Porrigo* at all. I have seen a great many cases of it, but still in my experience, it is as compared with the other

species rare. I have usually too seen several cases about the same time, and then not observed one for a considerable period. I think I have scarcely ever removed the disease under less than three months, and often it has required a treatment of still greater duration. It has appeared to me that the state of health usually connected with this affection, is generally characterized by want of power, to which perhaps the imperfect nutrition at the surface, the distinctive feature of this disease would seem to lend some probability. I have derived advantage from direct stimulation of the surface, by liniments, embrocations, and washes, which I never employ in the other varieties, and that diet has appeared best, which with due attention to the existing powers of the stomach, and the functions of the other members of the chylopoietic viscera, might be called strengthening, including small quantities of animal food, but excluding as much as possible oily, greasy, or butyraceous matter. The foregoing observations are chiefly drawn from the consideration of the cases in children, amongst

whom the great majority of these diseases occur; but they apply with equal force to the adult. With regard to those varieties which occur most frequently in the latter, the observations of Dr. Bateman appear to me to comprise a correct view of the subject. Some difference is of course required in the treatment, but this will be mentioned in its proper place.



### CHAPTER III.

*On Diet, and especially that which is proper in the Treatment of Porrigo.*

As the object is the same in all cases, viz. to select such a diet as shall be best suited to the powers, and most likely to ensure a tranquil condition of the digestive organs; so many of the observations which I am about to offer will apply with equal force to the regulation of diet in other diseases as to those under consideration. However diversified the detail may be, it is quite certain that the ultimate objects are the same: they may be thus stated, firstly, to proportion the quantity of food to the powers of the stomach; and secondly, to choose such food as *cæteris paribus* shall be least mischievous when unassimilated.

To ascertain the quantity of food which a stomach is capable of digesting, is often difficult, and sometimes impossible; for the same stomach which shall digest a given quantity of food to-day, will sometimes be exceedingly annoyed by the same task being imposed on it to-morrow; and this when we can discover nothing in the condition of the other organs which shall explain the phenomenon. The fact does not surprise me, merely because it may be inexplicable; for besides a number of other considerations, which would lead me too far from my present object, it is necessary to the production of the same effects, by the same quantity of food, that, not only the organ to which it is submitted, but the nervous system generally, between which and the stomach so constant a sympathy exists, should be in a similar condition; and this we have too often little or no power of investigating.

The more marked instances of nervous disturbance are, it is true, obvious enough; but many of its lighter degrees quite baffle any known mode of investigation. I do

not wish to represent the subject as attended by more difficulties than it is ; that is quite unnecessary. It is nevertheless very important that we should not be unprepared for those which really attend it, and quite essential that we should not shut our eyes to facts merely because we are unable to account for them. If, however, we endeavour to avoid any undue influence from preconceived opinions, we may, by the adoption of a few rules suggested by common sense, and sanctioned by experience, ascertain the powers of the stomach, sufficiently in most cases for practical purposes, and in many with considerable accuracy.

First, with regard to appetite.—This must be admitted to be often a very unsafe guide, but still it may, I conceive, be depended on much more frequently than is generally supposed, *provided* that we give the nerves of the stomach a fair chance of exercising their healthy functions, and do not subject them to the misleading influence of unnecessary stimulation.

Inordinate appetite, though a well known symptom of some conditions of stomach,



may be regarded as an exception, when compared with a contrary disposition in the organ; for it is much more frequently the result of mismanagement, I mean in fact direct stimulation than disease. Nor is the power of stimulating the stomach, or rather of exciting appetite, by any means confined to stimulating substances commonly so called, although the habitual use of pepper, mustard, ginger, and other spices, sufficiently attest the frequency with which the stomach is subjected to their influence. I need scarcely mention, that acid, saccharine, and saline substances, are well known to be powerful excitors of appetite; but it is not so generally known, or rather remembered, that mere change of flavour confers the power in just as marked a degree. A child for instance, will eat as much potatoe and bread, rice, tapioca, or arrow-root pudding as shall satisfy it, nor crave for more, and yet very readily eat several ounces of pastry, biscuit, or fruit. The same observation applies to the various kinds of food taken by adults. We often observe individuals satisfy their hunger on one dish, and

when an unexpected delicacy, or addition to the repast appears, largely partaking of it. It is by no means necessary, that in either case the articles shall have stimulating properties, commonly so called, nor even saccharine, or saline flavours. It is enough that the flavour be different, so long as it be not unpalatable.

No small portion of the difficulty in proportioning quantity will be removed, if we rigidly interdict the use of more than one article at any one repast; and at the same time enjoin the careful exclusion of all stimulants, not only those articles ordinarily so classed, but using the term in the more extended sense in which I have here employed it. It may be said that many stomachs will digest better with the admission of a moderate quantity of the usual stimuli; this may be true, but the propriety or impropriety of allowing these will be considered with the medical treatment, to which, when treating of disordered stomachs, it essentially belongs; since whatever we may do, subsequently, such direct stimulants must not be thought of so long as we are en-

deavouring to ascertain what are the natural powers of the digestive organs.

A very little observation will convince any one, that these rules are of the first importance: I have often known patients who have complained of the restrictions in diet to which, under my directions, they were subjected, cease to do so when these rules have been observed. Another point which is by no means unimportant, is the recollection that the quantity will be different in different cases, and this too, where neither the age, nor any very obvious circumstance is present to account for the peculiarity. It is of consequence to bear this in mind, because it prevents too hasty a generalization on a subject, of which our knowledge is yet but limited. No man can entertain a more profound respect than myself, for the opinions of Mr. Abernethy, nor more sincerely feel that he has been very largely a benefactor of mankind. Yet I humbly conceive, that the application of his principles, as taught by himself, is not wholly free from the effects of too hasty a generalization. His general rules, I believe to



be the very best with which we are acquainted ; but I scarcely think that they make sufficient allowance for the exceptions which are met with in practice ; and that therefore they are calculated (when too literally or indiscriminately followed) to limit the operation, and consequently to abridge the utility of his own principles.

In endeavouring to adjust the quantity of food to the powers of the stomach, nothing is so important as to avoid repletion ; and this may certainly be done by prescribing only the minimum of food which may be necessary for support, in the strict sense of the word ; but nothing is, in my opinion, more easy than to fall into a less mischievous, truly, but still a material error. I submit that continued hunger, which is often consequent on insufficient food, is no less an evil, because it is not so clearly injurious as repletion. It was a saying of no less truth than beauty, often used by Mr. Abernethy, that our very wants ministered to our gratifications ; and no one can, I think, have experienced the strength and comfort consequent on a healthy and

moderate meal, without admitting that the constant presence of hunger is calculated to produce a very opposite condition of the nervous system. Practically it is so: persons who are unnecessarily restricted, become, under the teasing influence of continued appetite, fidgety and uncomfortable. They are impatient and discontented, and influenced by a state of mind exceedingly unfavourable to a healthy condition of body. I must here not be misunderstood: many persons when first subjected to restrictions in diet, will complain of hunger when they have eaten the portion allotted to them, and in half an hour the sensation shall cease. This is not the case to which I refer; as this is morbid sensation, the result of bad habit. It is the continued hunger consequent on an insufficient allowance, which I allude to, as productive of injurious impressions on the nervous system. There are cases truly, in which this plan is necessary, but they are foreign to the present subject. It should be remembered, therefore, that whilst above all things it is necessary to avoid putting more food into the

stomach than it can digest, yet it is by no means unimportant to give the organ as much as its powers unassisted by stimulation are fully equal to perform. Now no method with which I am acquainted, is better for this purpose, than first determining how much food we consider necessary for the day's consumption. To state this is impossible; because different ages, different constitutions, nay different states of the same constitution, will occasion endless modifications in this respect; but the plan of first determining how much food is sufficient for the day, generally renders each division moderate; for we seldom calculate the vast quantity which the aggregate of a day's consumption would produce. This should be divided into several small portions, and taken at intervals of every two, three, four, or six hours, according to circumstances. In this way we incur the least possible risk of offending the stomach, and ascertain to a considerable nicety how much it can take with perfect impunity. The periods may cautiously be lengthened, and the quantities increased, as may be



otherwise advisable in the case treated, or until the meals are taken at only the usual number of periods: these stated generally should be three times a day in adults, and four times a day in children.

In our endeavours to ascertain whether any portion of food remain unassimilated, we should not only regard the general condition of the patient, but direct the excretions to be examined; especially the fæces and urine; for in the former we not unfrequently discover undigested aliment where there is no other direct evidence of indigestion; and I have been accustomed to see a loaded condition of the urine very frequently accompanying imperfect performance of the digestive function: notwithstanding that an attentive observance of these suggestions will generally enable us to prescribe a diet suited to the powers of the stomach, yet it must be admitted that in many cases we cannot entirely succeed. A flattering progress will sometimes be interrupted without our being able to assign any cause. Disorders of the digestive organs will be accompanied by conditions of sto-

mach, which however cautiously or kindly treated, will nevertheless at times become irritable and unmanageable; and hence it becomes highly desirable to select food which, whilst it is sufficiently nutritious in kind, shall prove least injurious if undigested.

In discussing this subject it may not be improper to consider undigested aliment as Mr. Abernethy seems to have done: that is, as placed in a warm and moist situation, and liable (in the event of not being acted upon by vital influences) to chemical decomposition. Physiological observation suggests some difficulty in the adoption of this conclusion; nor is it one which I am particularly anxious to establish, although I know of nothing which can impugn its probability. The possibility at least of chemical agency under the circumstances implied, cannot be denied, nor the mischievous results exaggerated, which might be consequent on the deleterious products of decomposition, being in contact with the most actively secreting and absorbing surfaces of the body. Even from this view of the subject, it seems

probable that undigested vegetable aliment would be least mischievous, for it ordinarily requires a longer time than animal matter for the first stages of decomposition, whilst its known tendency to excite the bowels would lead to its more speedy discharge. Whatever may be the explanation, there is no doubt of the fact, that much less disturbance usually arises from the presence of undigested *farinaceous* vegetable, than from that of animal food in a similar condition. I do not assert this of *all* vegetable matter. If digestion were a process conducted in the manner in which it is sometimes represented, the results might be different.

It has been said that the first change which takes place in the food is its conversion into a homogeneous mass, which has been called chyme; but I much doubt whether any such process takes place, and believe this impression must originally have arisen from the observance of farinaceous food, which, when comminuted, and thus exposed to warmth and moisture, certainly presents very much the appearance represented to characterize chyme: no investi-



gation which has been instituted has enabled me to discover any such process. I have opened a great many animals from time to time which had taken food at different periods before death ; and many of which had been fed expressly for purposes of investigation after death, but in none did I ever see any thing like the chyme, as it is called. In those fed on purpose, the appearance presented by the meat was, that the surface next the stomach was in a soft gelatinous condition, just such as we might imagine would precede its complete solution, but the remaining portion was just as plainly beef or mutton as it would have been under any other circumstances, making due allowance for its being somewhat obscured by comminution, and the peculiar sort of mawkishly-acid odour of the secretions of the organ. So far as my recollection serves me, the researches of Dr. W. Philip concur in these results. It does not follow that the mode of digestion should be precisely the same in the human stomach ; but it is in the highest degree probable that when we find no great difference in structure, there

will be a great similarity in function—and therefore that in all animals with membranous stomachs, the process of digestion is essentially the same. It seldom happens that we have an opportunity of examining the human stomach under circumstances which warrant any decided conclusion, but I could never see in the examination of bodies (and I have probably had a fair share of experience in this way), the contents of the stomach representing such an appearance as that usually described under the term chyme. There seems then every reason for concluding that food when undigested in the stomach, retains for a time at least its characteristic properties, and that the idea of its becoming amenable to chemical agency is therefore at least probable.

All persons who have the management of children, however indiscreet many of them may be on other points, seem to be aware of the tendency to disorder consequent on too liberal a supply of animal food ; and it appears reasonable to suppose, that a diet which in young persons so

readily disorders the system when in perfect health, can scarcely be proper when it is labouring under disease. The question, however, of the comparative noxious or innoxious influence of *undigested* animal and farinaceous vegetable matter, must be decided by experience; and all I can add is, that my own fully awards the general preference to vegetable matter, and justifies the conclusion that it is especially applicable to many varieties of cutaneous affections. Different conditions of the stomach of course require different kinds of diet, and these are multiplied by original or acquired peculiarities of the organ. No doubt, however, can exist of at least two grand divisions having been ascertained; viz., animal and vegetable: that, naturally designed to digest both, stomachs sometimes have the power of acting on the one, and at other times of digesting the other. In all cases, however, where no contra-indication exists, it is very useful for the reasons before stated, until we have ascertained the powers of the stomach, to re-



commend a farinaceous diet: whether we subsequently change or add to it or whether we continue it, as is so especially advantageous in the various forms of Porrigo.

I believe the foregoing remarks to be applicable to the subject generally, but particularly to the treatment of children. The great irritability of the mucous membranes in children, so forcibly exemplified in the diseases of the eye, nose, mouth, and respiratory organs, equally characterizes that, lining the alimentary canal. Very trivial causes therefore produce considerable annoyance, which never fails to disorder the whole system in a very unequivocal manner; unless indeed some local disease supervene, as a relief to the alimentary disturbance.

The diet which I have employed in the treatment of Porrigo, may be inferred from the foregoing observations; but that I may not be misunderstood, I will now state it still more particularly. Farinaceous vegetable matter is its chief ingredient; but I allow milk, the yolk of eggs, which with rusks, bread in various forms, sago, arrow-

root, tapioca, and plain puddings, constitute the diet. Meat of all kinds, in culinary language, whether fish, flesh, or fowl, is strictly forbidden. In my own practice I confine the diet strictly to an alternation of the articles I have first mentioned ; and represent any greater range in variety as inadmissible. This is the only way of striking at the root, as it were, of many absurd and mischievous customs, which prevail with regard to children in all ranks of life. The poor are very apt to give their children, unless especially enjoined to the contrary, morsels of pastry, or fruit, either to quiet them when troublesome, or as occasional indulgences. The rich of all classes are also prone to the same kind of error. Children are often left too much to the nurses to enable us to be certain as to the regulation of their diet ; and the habit which some have of allowing their children to come in after dinner and to partake of the dessert, is undoubtedly mischievous. This too is especially the case when children have been deprived of this indulgence for a short time, during the more trouble-

some period of some trifling indisposition, as the milder cases of *Porriga* are considered. I need hardly add, that on these occasions, whatever is put into the stomach is to be regarded as trash presented to the organ, when it neither requires nor is prepared for food. All this may perhaps be very natural, and that for which in perfect health good-nature may find excuses; but whilst there is any disorder, surely nothing can be more mischievous, or when forbidden, more inexcusable.

Although mothers are not always the best assistants in obstinate diseases, yet with a little pains taking, I have seldom failed to impress them with the necessity of implicitly complying with the necessary restrictions. Where this cannot be done, and where directions are disregarded, I would never continue my advice; for the profession is too often brought into discredit, by holding nominally the charge of a case of which it really has only the responsibility. The mode of conducting the diet in children, will of course vary in different cases, being in some more spare, in others more liberal.



In some cases I confine the diet entirely to a moderate quantity of bread and milk four times a day ; in others where milk is too rich it should be diluted with water ; in a third class, milk disagrees and is wholly withheld. Some have milk and bread at other times, and a bread pudding, or arrow root for dinner. For those who appear over nourished, the quantity should be small, the milk diluted, and the arrow root given with bread but no milk. Those on the contrary, who appear imperfectly nourished, and yet who shew no evidences of food passing undigested, may have the more nutritious food with the superaddition of the yolk of an egg once a day ; in such, a bread pudding for dinner is a desirable addition. The poor feed their children largely on potatoes, and so long as they are farinaceous (mealy) and well boiled, I know of no diet which ordinarily appears to agree better. I always carefully forbid oily or greasy matter of every description. The puddings should be as plainly made as possible, and the only fruit pudding I allow is apple. This generally agrees, and

seems to assist the bowels where they are disposed to torpor, but if the bowels are already acting with regularity, it is as well to abstain from fruit puddings entirely. Should there be present any marked irritation of the mucous membrane of the bowels, I sometimes direct nothing to be given for a day or two, but bread and water gruel, and then resume the diet previously adopted.

The quantity of food will vary so much in different cases, from difference of age and other circumstances, that it is impossible to give precise directions thereon. A small breakfast-cup of bread and milk I should say was a hearty meal for a child. For very young children less than that quantity is sufficient, while those of a more advanced age will require a larger quantity. Children of three years old and upwards should not be fed more than three times a day. In points of detail, much after all must be left to the practitioner; but any plan is better than overloading the digestive organs. The diet in adults should be precisely the same, with a proportioned addition to the quantity.

With regard to drink, water, toast and water, or weak barley water, is the best beverage. Children who are properly fed will seldom require more than a very moderate quantity of drink. In adults the same observation is generally true. With regard to not drinking at meal-times, for the most part it is best to avoid doing so; but this is one of the general rules of which we are obliged to modify the adoption. We must recollect that we are treating of disordered stomachs, and that it is by no means always safe to infer the correctness of a plan from considerations drawn from a healthy condition of the organ. On the contrary, however excellent a plan may be in the abstract, it is often necessary to introduce it only by degrees. Abstinence from drink at meal time sometimes produces disordered stomachs, a thirst that is all but insatiable. This is an evil which should be avoided, and where the peculiarity exists, should be overcome by a gradual diminution of the quantity of fluid. These views incline me to think that it is in vain to state any time as particularly proper



for drinking after having taken food. I should say that in states of disordered stomach we ought not to wait until the thirst becomes urgent, nor instantly attend to its first suggestions.

I have now for many years experienced the happiest effects from this kind of diet in the various forms of *Porrigio*, and in persons of all ages ; and although it is for the principle that I chiefly contend in the treatment of these diseases, yet many circumstances have concurred to convince me, that as regards diet, this is the only correct application of it in *Porrigio*. I have had patients on whom considerable pains had been taken with the diet, and where there had been adopted what appeared to be a judicious administration of medicine ; yet the cases have proved obstinate, and subsequently yielded very readily when subjected to a mild farinaceous diet. Some of the patients have been the children of medical men, who, of course, were competent judges of the matter.

So confident am I in the treatment of these diseases, by these and such other

means as I shall presently mention, that I have made it the subject of remark to the pupils and other gentlemen who have occasionally visited the Dispensary, for many years past. Diet is however, as far as my investigations have hitherto gone, only one part of the treatment. It is often necessary to correct disordered secretions, to excite sluggish bowels, to regulate those which are irritable,—and this leads me to the remarks which I have to offer on the medical treatment of Porrigo.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *Of the Medical Treatment.*

I have already remarked on the mischievous consequences which result from too abundant a supply of food. I think they are nearly equalled by too liberal an administration of medicine. The observation may possibly subject me to some unpleasant criticism ; but I cannot but think that some rules of a very elementary character are too frequently disregarded in medical treatment. It seems undeniable, that a medicine which does not achieve the object for which it was prescribed, is very likely to produce mischief. In cases where it is necessary to be cautious as to the quantity, even of the most wholesome food that we put into the



stomach, it seems quite unreasonable to suppose that medicine can be placed there with negative results. The remembrance of this fact must, I think, make us cautious in prescribing, and induce us to administer medicine in such a manner as shall be least calculated to obscure our reasoning. The uncertain nature of the science of medicine renders it of all others the most difficult, but the difficulties are often unnecessarily multiplied. Any one who has attended to this subject, must surely have remarked many instances in which, if the treatment were successful, it was quite impossible to say to what the success was attributable, or if otherwise, to what to ascribe the failure. I am well aware that, in prescription, a happy combination will sometimes effect that which neither article will accomplish singly, nor in any other known mode of combination ; but making the largest allowance for this, it is still true, that the unnecessary complexity often employed in prescription, has too often the effect of fogging the nature of the case, and obscuring the effects of the remedies. Simplicity

in prescription, then, appears to me to be of the first importance; and with the exceptions of such known combinations as those to which I have alluded, if the articles be multiplied, they should be added with such intervals in their succession as the case may admit; in order that, should failure occur, we may not neglect an ingredient which may be serviceable either alone or in some other mode of combination; or if disagreement take place, we may at least know, with considerable probability, to what it may be ascribed. As the disordered conditions, which occasionally present themselves in connexion with *Porriga*, are infinitely diversified, much that I shall offer with reference to the medical treatment, will apply to the treatment of children in general. At once I should dismiss the subject, leaving it to the discretion of the practitioner, were it not that the uncertainties of medical science are such, that I cannot with confidence recommend the treatment which I have found so successful, unless as far as I am able to point it out, it be followed

in detail. In all cases, the treatment should be commenced by a gentle, but efficient evacuation of the bowels.

I have so often had occasion to regret the delay consequent on inattention to this point, that I now suffer myself to draw no conclusion (from the report of nurses or other persons) as to the contents of the bowels, until those organs have been acted on by small graduated doses of aperient medicines.

I have no confidence in any other mode of accomplishing this object than by the administration of small doses of aperient medicine every three or four hours in the day, recommended by Mr. Abernethy. I have too often seen "doses" of aperient medicine fail of completely evacuating the alimentary canal; whilst with the fæcal matter which has been thrown off, there has been an abundant secretion not required; constituting, in many cases, an injurious depletion. I could relate a large number of facts drawn from very dissimilar sources, proving the correctness of these views, and



shewing that treatment otherwise well directed, had often failed from the want of this preliminary measure.

I think this part of the subject so important, not only with regard to the management of the bowels in children but adults also, that I cannot avoid selecting a fact or two, which not only illustrate the point in question, but are, I think, calculated by their general interest to impress it on the memory. Some years ago I attended a man for a diseased foot, consequent on an old gun-shot wound; the tarsus was completely disorganized, and the pain he suffered from it was seriously affecting his general health, which indeed appeared sinking under the influence of local irritation. I could propose nothing but amputation, and indeed the symptoms induced me to urge its early performance. The man however laboured under diarrhæa, which he said, with short intervals, had annoyed him more or less for six months. This was indeed an additional circumstance very disqualifying for the support of a severe operation; and as he was at this time continuing a diet

prescribed by a very eminent surgeon (probably under different circumstances) which included a quart of porter daily, I was resolved to try whether I could not, by an alteration of diet, at least mitigate so unfavorable a symptom. Accordingly I gradually diminished the quantity of porter, substituted a moderate and less irritating diet, and gave him such medicines as appeared to be indicated. The result was, that very shortly the diarrhæa ceased, his bowels acted with regularity, and he improved in health and appearance, when, for reasons before mentioned, I performed the operation.

No patient could possibly have borne an operation better, and for a few days every thing seemed to be going on favourably; when suddenly his bowels became torpid, and this, spite of all our endeavours to relieve him, ending in an insufferable constipation, the man died. I examined his body—the small intestines were uncommonly distended with air; the large were in rather a contracted condition, but completely filled with such scybala as I never before wit-

nessed. I can only convey a true impression of their nature by saying, that until the intestines were opened, and their contents examined, so hard were these masses of fæcal matter, that no one present entertained any other impression but that they were of a calculous nature. The following case also illustrates very forcibly more than one point in connexion with the accompanying observations.

Mr. Wilson, of Northampton Square, requested my attention to a child, labouring under a very severe inflammation of the eye. On examining the organ, I found the conjunctiva in a state of chemosis. There was an ulcer on the cornea, and matter was effused between the layers of this membrane (onyx). Effusion had also taken place in the anterior chamber (hypopion); lymph had become deposited on the surface of the iris, and there was considerable duski-ness of that part of the anterior chamber not occupied by the hypopion; a condition of the eye, in short, which any surgeon, familiar with such matters, will at once recognize as a highly dangerous inflam-



mation of the organ. The case was not the less interesting from the fact that a very judicious and not inactive administration of the antiphlogistic plan with mercury had been already instituted by Mr. Wilson, so that I had no resource but to recommend the still more active employment of the same remedies. All we could accomplish however was, to keep the inflammation in check. Now, although the case was one of pure inflammation in all other respects, yet, as it is not the character of pure inflammation to remain stationary, I began to suspect that there was some peculiar condition of the system influencing the local disturbance. I made particular inquiry as to the usual condition of the bowels ; but all we could elicit, was, that when the child was considered to be in good health, they were habitually sluggish. On examining the abdomen, it seemed rather tumid. Mr. Wilson and myself now agreed to lay aside the antiphlogistic treatment, and simply administer small doses of aloes and soap every three or four hours, until we should have procured several free evacuations

from the bowels. This object was very satisfactorily accomplished, but without producing the slightest improvement in the inflammation, on the contrary, the ulcer in the cornea has rather deepened since the suspension of the active anti-inflammatory treatment.

The mercury and other parts of the active treatment were now resumed, with the most marked and rapid benefit. It was curious to observe how soon the deposited matters between the layers of the cornea, in the anterior chamber and on the iris, became absorbed. The ulcer healed, and in a short time (I forget the number of days) our patient was quite well, the cornea having recovered its transparency, and vision being perfect.

Now these cases shew that discharges from the bowels may take place, even so as to constitute diarrhæa on the one hand, and be excited by that active administration of purges which forms part of the incipient antiphlogistic treatment on the other, and yet so little of the contained matters be evacuated, that the canal shall remain in

really a loaded condition. So long ago as when I was dresser to Mr. Abernethy, I recollect a very obstinate inflammation of the eye disappearing in twenty-four hours, under circumstances very similar. These and a multitude of facts of an analagous kind, have impelled me to the conviction, that in administering aperients for the purpose of emptying the bowels of their contents, there is absolutely no other mode of accomplishing this object with certainty, but by that gradual and gentle solicitation of their action which I have described.

In selecting a medicine for this purpose, nothing answers in children better than small doses of calomel, rhubarb and ginger; that is to say, half-a-grain of calomel, five or six of rhubarb, and three of ginger, given at the required intervals, until the effect be produced. It is a great object to avoid giving pain; and this is not always easy. A solution of manna in warm water, with the addition of a small quantity of some aromatic tincture, sometimes proves a very comfortable aperient where the rhubarb acts unkindly. The same may be said of



small doses of castor oil. Calomel and jalap, with ginger, is also a most useful aperient, given in doses of five grains of the jalap; but I have more frequently employed this form in adults and children at more advanced ages, than those who are most commonly affected by *Porriga*. When I prescribe jalap in young children, it is in cases where the rhubarb does not prove sufficiently active; which a very few grains of jalap seldom fail to correct in the manner we desire. Sometimes, indeed, we have very great difficulty in getting any medicine to act either comfortably or effectually on disordered bowels; this sometimes renders it necessary that we should vary our aperients; and in so doing, we occasionally employ with success, medicines not ordinarily productive of the effects which, in individual cases, we derive from them. Thus, in particular instances, I have known the pulv. scammoniae comp., and even aloes and soap, act more efficiently and more comfortably than any previously employed. These are,

however, exceptions which, in my experience, only prove the general superiority of the rhubarb and its combinations.

In the treatment of *Porriga*, the efficient evacuation of the bowels having been once obtained, thenceforth a very little medicine generally suffices to ensure their daily action. But we have often to correct other disorders of them besides mere torpor, as well as faulty actions of the stomach and liver; and not unfrequently all three in conjunction. In endeavouring to effect any of the foregoing objects, I need scarcely observe, that where we can ascertain as much, our chief attention should be directed to that organ whose functions appear to have been primarily deranged, or in the absence of the history of the case indicating this, to that whose actions at the present moment appear most faulty. If we find, however, that the viscus to which we may be thus especially directing our attention does not readily yield to our measures, and supposing that other organs are simultaneously disordered, which is generally the

case ; it is better to attack the offending organ, if I may so express myself, through the medium of its sympathies, than to labour at this object by larger, or as we may consider them, more efficient doses of medicine. Lest I should have expressed myself obscurely, I will try to exemplify my meaning hypothetically : thus ; supposing a child's appetite were voracious, that the liver was secreting but little bile, and that not of the most healthy kind, and that the bowels evinced considerable irritation of their mucous lining, a combination too common, — suppose further, that we had clearly elicited from the history of such a case, that the liver was primarily disordered ; and that, notwithstanding a well regulated diet, and small doses of calomel, or what would be better, *hydræ creta* with some mild aperient every second or third night, the disordered function remained unimproved ; in such a case it is better to direct our attentions, almost exclusively, to the stomach and bowels, than it is to give larger doses of the mercurial : for the same sympathy which had induced the disor-



dered condition of stomach and bowels will, if either of these can be rendered comfortable, beneficially re-act, and either directly ameliorate the condition of the organ primarily disordered, or indirectly, by allowing effect to medicines which had been before unsuccessfully administered.

We are generally said to endeavour to restore a healthy state of the secretions by medicines called alterative. I have mentioned different conditions which I have more commonly seen in connexion with *Porrigo*, and I will now endeavour to point out the manner in which I have most frequently succeeded in correcting them. In the majority of cases, if the diet be strictly adhered to, a repetition of the rhubarb, calomel and ginger, every second or third night, is all that is necessary; some little difference being made in the doses, according to the excitability of the bowels. Some few patients do very well without any medicine at all.

In a multiplicity of cases, a number as well as a variety of exceptions will occur; and first, of those which relate to the sto-

mach. I have not often found it necessary to interfere *medically* with this organ, further than in the correction of voracious appetite, which sometimes exists in such a degree as greatly to irritate the nervous system. I believe that this would, in many cases, gradually subside under the influence of a rational diet alone; but its relief is much expedited by the administration of small doses of ipecacuanha or antimony—one grain of the former, or two or three grains of the latter, may be given every night with half-a-grain of calomel and the rhubarb with great advantage.—I prefer the ipecacuanha in most cases, and the bowels having been previously evacuated it very rarely produces sickness, as might in children have been anticipated. The secretions of the liver in children are generally regulated best by small doses of calomel, like that in the occasional powder of which I have spoken: in some cases calomel in any dose seems to produce irritation, when it should be entirely relinquished, and the hydrargyrus c. creta substituted instead. This preparation is especially proper if the bowels

be at the same time irritable, when it may be given alone, or advantageously combined with rhubarb, as may be otherwise indicated.

Before I quit this part of the subject, I would observe, that where the dejections from the bowels evince at one time a paucity of bile, and at another a morbid secretion from the liver, great benefit results from producing considerable secretion; this is most certainly accomplished either by jalap and calomel, or calomel and aloes, given every three or four hours, in the manner I have already mentioned, until copious discharges shall have been obtained.

No organs however are so frequently deranged as the bowels, and if these do not maintain the irritable conditions of the chylipoietic viscera, nothing at least produces so much general benefit as the correction of their morbid manifestations. For this reason, where a little more difficulty than usual exists either in correcting disordered stomach or liver, the bowels should, in children, be our chief object; for they are often disordered without there being any



manifest disturbance of the stomach or liver; but these last are almost never disturbed without the bowels being very obviously affected. This is what we might expect, perhaps, but practically, it is important. Nothing is more advantageous than to induce the bowels to act without pain; the accomplishment of this object will well repay us for any trouble which we may experience in obtaining it: in ordinary cases varying the quantity of the aromatic with the rhubarb will usually suffice; but sometimes rhubarb itself gives pain: this should be met by combining it differently, increasing its activity, or relinquishing its use.

Rhubarb may sometimes be made to act comfortably by combining it with hydrar. c. creta, or a grain or two of the compound powder of ipecacuanha. Sometimes it appears to give pain by the slowness of its operation, when the addition of a grain of ipecacuanha, or two or three grains of jalap, will frequently cause it to act efficiently and comfortably at the same time. I am not in the habit of prescribing jalap to very young children, except it be for the purposes which I

have mentioned ; but in children of about six years and upwards, if the system be loaded or the bowels habitually torpid,\* it is a very useful medicine. In such cases six grains of jalap, half a grain of calomel, one of ipecacuanha, with some aromatic, should it give pain, every second or third night, sometimes does more to regulate the secretions than other medicine.

Should there be much slime, mucus, or jelly passing with the stools ; or should the bowels prove intractable without evincing such very strong evidences of irritation, nothing is more beneficial than the daily administration of warm water enemata. They are directly comfortable to the surface to which they are applied ; and by relieving irritation there, frequently give effect to other remedies. About three quarters of a pint should be injected every night ; or, in some cases, both night and morning. Usually, warm water is all that

\* I have seen many children whose bowels required medicine to induce them to act, in as large doses as are usually administered to adults : relatively to the mass, these are of course to be regarded as exceptions.

is necessary ; but there are cases in which weak gruel, and in somewhat larger quantity, may be advantageously substituted. I have indeed seen so much good result from the employment of enemata, that I now seldom wait until any existing irritation of the bowels proves obstinate ; but order their administration whenever the abdomen is tumid, or the secretion from the bowels evidences irritation ; provided that the efficient discharge of their contained matter shall have been previously obtained.

In patients who are of a scrofulous diathesis, and in whom we may suspect mesenteric affections, frictions on the abdomen are sometimes very useful ; and from an unexpected degree of benefit which I have derived from it in a few instances of mesenteric disease, I generally order the tartar emetic ointment to be rubbed on the abdomen, until a few pustules are produced (an artificial *Porrigio* as I have sometimes termed it).

Should there be worms, terebinthinate medicines may be employed ; but I trust to repeated small doses of aloes and calomel.



I prefer these, because as it appears to me, I not only produce the discharge of these animals with certainty, but they do not so readily again make their appearance. We know but little about these animals; but could we discover it, the object in treating them is evidently not only to procure their expulsion, but to correct, at the same time, the morbid condition which favours their production, and on which it may possibly depend.

I have hitherto spoken with especial reference to children. The plan I pursue in adults is very similar. They are forbidden animal food of every description, with the exception of milk and eggs; and I generally recommend them to live as much as they can on bread in different forms. Wine, ale, porter, and spirits, are withheld. The bowels are cleared by jalap and calomel given in the way which I have before mentioned. If the biliary secretions seem to require it, small doses of mercury are given every night; or every second night, in the form of five grains of the pil. hydrargyri; or an equal quantity of the

compound calomel pill. If these do not answer, blue pill, or calomel, are given with colocynth occasionally, where mercury is indicated; and where it produces irritation, the addition of a grain or two of the extract of hyoscyamus will sometimes render it more comfortable to the patient. I have sometimes found that a patient will bear a mild dose of mercury, in the form of five grains of the pill hydrargyri, with two or three of the sulphate of quinine, where no other preparation can be exhibited without being prejudicial.

We sometimes meet with a case where the state of the biliary functions renders it desirable to give small doses of mercury; and yet where the idiosyncrasy of the patient renders it inadmissible. In such persons good fresh extract of colocynth, with small doses of the dilute nitric acid, form the best substitutes with which I am acquainted.

With a view to correct disordered secretion merely, I am averse to other than moderate doses of mercury; for however valuable a remedy it may be in inflammatory diseases, and in many states of

partial circulation, I am convinced that, in other affections, it is often given not only unnecessarily, but with great mischief. I have plenty of conclusive evidence on this point, which I shall hereafter submit to the profession. At present I only recommend caution in prescribing large doses of mercury, where we find small ones inefficient for the regulation of secretion,—and submit that it is, in most of such cases, better to endeavour to effect an amelioration of the biliary functions by directing our attention to the other members of the chylopoietic viscera, with which the liver is so prone to sympathise.

I have thus given, as briefly as I could, the detail of the medical part of the treatment which I have employed in Porigo. I have no doubt that it is open to criticism; and things to which I attach great importance, may be regarded by some as elementary truisms. My only answer to this is, that these diseases are usually obstinate, and that the observance of the practice which I have endeavoured to explain, will render the treatment successful.



## CHAPTER V.

### *On the Local Treatment of Porrigo.*

VARIOUS writers recommend various applications to the parts affected in these diseases. I believe that there is scarcely a wash or ointment known, that has not been used in one or other variety of Porrigo, to say nothing of liniments and embrocations. There is scarcely a practitioner who has not some remedy which he prefers to all others; nor an institution in which there is not a favourite local application. Dr. Bateman and Alibert alone, constitute authority for almost every thing which the Pharmacopœia supplies; and in fact, the only thing in which writers and practitioners appear to agree is, that the whole catalogue is often unsucces-

ful. I believe that local remedies exert a very limited influence in these diseases, and the nature of that, I will endeavour presently to explain.

I not only believe this to be a true view of the subject, but it seems to me an unavoidable inference from the facts which I have mentioned. Nothing is more certain than that many of the local applications which have been recommended, have been positively injurious. It is unnecessary to enter on any elaborate proof of this, since many of the remedies recommended are far too irritating to be likely to be beneficial; whilst the unsparing quantities in which others have been applied, must have materially interfered with the functions of such portions of skin as were yet healthy, and have been a sufficiently certain means of extending the disease which they were intended to relieve. Local applications are very unimportant, provided they have certain negative properties—provided, indeed, they possess none others than being unctuous, and slightly stimulating; and even this latter is often unnecessary. Whilst,

however, I attach little importance to the various medicated local remedies which have been recommended, I would not be understood as representing the local *treatment* as a thing of no consequence. On the contrary, whilst we are endeavouring to improve the general health, we should be careful that the effect of this part of the treatment be not retarded by local circumstances; for in the same manner that a simple incision will not heal when subjected to constant irritation, so neither will these diseases in general get well unless kept free from mechanical or chemical irritation. If the incrustations be suffered to accumulate, they will become hard, and will form indeed a most irritating application to the surface on which they lie; and this will be especially the case if there be a quantity of matted hair at the same time. These in conjunction too will confine the discharge, and in this way maintain a continued excitement. Unnecessary rudeness of manipulation either in washing, shaving, or drying the head, will each contribute to render the disease more or less obstinate. The different



forms of *Porriga* are not unfrequently maintained for a considerable time by the injudicious manner in which ointments are applied.

I have often seen ointment employed in a way which, from its quantity alone, must certainly have been productive of mischief, applied to the head, in fact, in a manner more like that in which butter is sometimes spread, than a surgical application to a susceptible and disordered surface. Employed in this manner, the most judiciously chosen will become rancid ; and irritating it will be, applied to healthy skin, whose functions it will impede rather than benefit, and will be either altogether irremovable at each dressing, or only by such continued washing as shall of itself become a source of irritation. Nor are unctuous applications those only which are injudiciously applied. Not long ago I saw a child who had had the advice of an eminent surgeon ; in this case the head was covered by a tolerably complete black coat of mail, formed by accumulated incrustation, dyed by a solution of the *argenti nitras*.

In the prevention of these mistakes the

local treatment is important. Further, it is very probable that, in some cases, long habit may have induced diseased action, which may prove obstinate under that influence alone. Many diseases which were unquestionably of constitutional origin, are maintained by local causes. The various diseases of the lower extremities present many demonstrations of this fact. And that habit has a certain influence in maintaining diseases of constitutional origin, which have been suffered to exist for a long time, is a circumstance equally evident. It may appear unphilosophical to speak of habit influencing living actions, and yet I know not how we can deny its power. The treatment which Mr. Abernethy recommended to what he called susceptible surfaces, (and I need not say how successfully), is to be explained on no other supposition. The whole history of diseases, as well as various peculiarities which cannot be considered morbid, seem to me to abound with proofs of the influence of the same principle. I make these observations because, to some who think

superficially, it might appear inconsistent that a disease of constitutional origin should require a local remedy.

I will now shew how the local treatment should be conducted ; and first, of shaving the head. This should be accomplished as soon as possible, but it is not always practicable at once. It is often necessary in the first place, to remove thick crusts of diseased secretion before the razor can be used. This is most speedily accomplished by large bread and water poultices, which will loosen the crusts sooner, if made without the addition of lard or any other greasy matter. They should of course be made soft and moist, and never suffered to dry on any part to which they are applied. In the worst cases, a few poultices removed at short intervals will suffice ; and then the head may be shaved. Sometimes the hair is so matted together in particular situations, and the surface so tender, that the shaving is difficult ; in which case the hair may be plucked to the extent necessary, This however, where proper pains are taken, is very seldom requisite. The head



should now be kept closely shaved. I expect some difference of opinion with reference to this last direction. I shall perhaps be told that the compliance with this injunction will, in many cases, be attended with an injurious degree of irritation; I reply that I have seen a great number of cases where this was pleaded as an excuse for the hair being suffered to grow to a certain extent, and that these have proved tractable only when the implied condition was insisted on. Although it would be absurd to deny that, in many cases, the shaving is productive of a degree of irritation which unquestionably it would be desirable to avoid; yet the growth of hair always does more to retard the relief of the disease than the irritation consequent on shaving.

The last-mentioned evil is indeed quite as frequently occasioned by the rough and incautious manner in which it is conducted, as it is by the great susceptibility of the part. I would advise the mother who is anxious to send her child to school, to stand by and see this part of the treatment ex-

ecuted, taking care that she does not, by unfounded apprehensions, render the child and barber so nervous as to produce the very consequences against which it is her object to guard. The head having been shaved as close as the nature of the case may admit, should be washed with soap and water until every particle of discharge be removed. The soap should next be entirely washed off by a liberal use of clean tepid water, and then the whole surface patted (not rubbed) with soft linen until perfectly dry. I generally direct the head to be shaved about twice a week.

With regard to the ointment to be employed; the selection, perhaps, is not very important, provided it be unctuous or un-irritating. I think too, that if it be in the slightest degree stimulating, the progress of the case is generally accelerated. Whatever ointment we select, it should be applied by means of a moderate sized camel-hair brush; with which instrument the whole of the affected surface should be, as it were, lightly painted; the ointment having been previously conveniently soft-

ened by warmth, so that the diseased parts should appear as if lightly oiled by the application, and nothing more. The dressing should be repeated night and morning, with the same care to cleanse the surface of all matters, including the ointment previously employed. In some instances this frequent dressing seems to produce irritation; when, repeating it once in twenty-four hours may be sufficient, especially if the renewal of the discharge be not very rapid or abundant.

I know that many cases, otherwise treated in the way which it is my object to recommend, will do very well, with no other ointment than that made with spermaceti; but as I think their progress accelerated by an ointment having slightly stimulating properties, I prefer the ung. hydrarg. nitrat. variously diluted, according to the susceptibility of the surface to which it is to be applied. That plan which, as a general one, may be considered as effectual as any, is to begin with a drachm of the ung. hydr. nitrat. to an ounce of lard, and gradually to increase the strength of



the ointment to that of the Pharmacopœia. But it cannot be too often insisted on, that it is of little use, however judiciously we may apply it, unless there be a disposition to amendment, which, as it appears to me, always depends on the improvement of the general health. At one time, I used various ointments and other kinds of local applications; I now hardly ever employ any other than the one which I have mentioned.

With regard to stimulant, astringent, and sedative lotions, or those which are supposed, in various degrees, to combine such properties; I have not found them beneficial in my own hands, and I have often enough known them unsuccessful in those of other surgeons. My own experience of their use has been but limited, as at no period have I ever extensively employed them. Although I have mentioned the ointment generally used in my own practice, yet were that not at hand, I should substitute any other having similar properties, with considerable, if not equal, confidence in its efficacy, provided the constitutional and

more important part of the treatment were judiciously conducted.

In conclusion I will only observe — that the local treatment is simple, yet that each part of it should be carefully executed, regardless of the trouble it requires. The head should be covered with a clean linen cap, and the usual caution of separate beds, towels, basins, etc. observed, to prevent the communication of the disease to other children.

Exercise, and pure air, as tending to improve the general health, are no doubt good additions to the plan which I have recommended;—but the obstacles in the way of forming any opinion on the effect of advice directed to the attainment of these objects in a crowded metropolis, put it out of my power to speak from experience with regard to them.

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